



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER – Governor
RICHARD M. ARMSTRONG – Director

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
450 West State Street, 10th Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0036
PHONE 208-334-5625
FAX 208-334-5926

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 5, 2007

Mary Ann Reuter
(208) 334-5559

Idaho 2-1-1 Call Center Celebrates 5th Anniversary

*Every Idahoan, every day, can have toll-free, bi-lingual access
to community resource information and referral.*

The Idaho CareLine, the state's comprehensive health and human services telephone referral service, is celebrating its fifth anniversary of 2-1-1 coverage today. The CareLine, first launched in 1991, was one of the first call centers in the nation to implement statewide 2-1-1 service. With all telephone land lines and major cellular providers on board, Idaho residents have virtually 100 percent availability of easy access 2-1-1 coverage throughout the state.

The Gem State was the fourth state in the country to accomplish this coverage. Nationwide, only about 65 percent of the U.S. population is currently able to access 2-1-1 service, which connects people with needed health and human services through an easy-to-remember three-digit phone number.

Calls to the Idaho CareLine have increased dramatically since adding the 2-1-1 access number, according to Pat Williams, program supervisor for the 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine. "During FY 2007, the 2-1-1 call center handled almost 152,000 calls," she reports. "During FY 2002, we assisted 38,200 callers. 2-1-1 has had a huge impact on making community services more accessible to our citizens."

Since 2-1-1 implementation five years ago, the Idaho CareLine has served approximately 567,700 Idahoans. That's equivalent to over 43 percent of the population, according to Williams, who is retiring this month after 27 years with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. Child care, social services and benefits, and Medicaid and other health resources have been frequent topics for callers.

-more-

"2-1-1 helps callers navigate not only Department of Health and Welfare services, but also the broader community resources available to them. Dialing 2-1-1 is a starting point. It's a critical "first call" to help people find the necessary resources to help keep families stable, safe and healthy."

The Idaho CareLine uses an extensive database of more than 3,400 health and human service providers to support the information and referral activities. The same searchable 2-1-1 web-based database is available 24/7 at www.idahocareline.org. It's another convenient way to "Get Connected. Get Answers."

This year, the 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine conducted customer service call-back surveys to determine the level of satisfaction with the service. Not surprisingly, 98 percent of those surveyed said they were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the service they received. Ninety-six percent of callers surveyed indicated they would use the 2-1-1 service again.

"As Idaho continues to experience a population explosion, it is essential to maintain an infrastructure that supports the quality of life Idaho families deserve," Williams says. "Connecting people with their neighbors, their communities, and help when they need it is key to successful and healthy growth for our state. 2-1-1 helps make that possible."

A copy of the 2-1-1 Idaho CareLine Annual Report is now available online at www.idahocareline.org. The report details the system overview, a summary of call categories and community needs, consumer comments, and information on funding and partners. A 2-1-1 anniversary fact sheet also is online.

-#-

**Editors: For more information or to schedule an interview, contact
Mary Ann Reuter, Public Information Specialist, at 208-334-5559.**